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ACTION SCT-03

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| INFO | LOG-00 | ACDA-17 | ACDE-00 | AID-01 | ARA-01 | A-01 | CA-02 |
| | CCO-00 | CG-00 | CIAE-00 | COME-00 | CTME-00 | OASY-00 | DODE-00 |
| | DOEE-00 | DOTE-00 | DS-00 | EB-01 | EUR-01 | FAAE-00 | FBIE-00 |
| | FBO-01 | H-01 | IMMC-01 | TEDE-00 | INR-00 | INSE-00 | LAB-01 |
| | L-01 | ADS-00 | M-00 | NRCE-00 | NSAE-00 | NSCE-00 | OCS-06 |
| | OIS-01 | OMB-01 | OPR-01 | PA-01 | PM-00 | PRS-01 | P-01 |
| | SNP-00 | SP-00 | SR-00 | SSO-00 | SS-00 | TRSE-00 | T-00 |
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AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
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AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 006058

FOR S/CT AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE WILCOX
ALSO FOR SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS OFFICE -- AMB GILLESPIE

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR

TAGS: PTER, PGOV, PREL, AR

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SUBJECT: INTERAGENCY COUNTER-TERRORIST TEAM
CONSULTATIONS IN BUENOS AIRES -- FOREIGN MINISTRY

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT

2. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE WILCOX TOLD VICE
FOREIGN MINISTER PETRELLA THAT HE WAS IN ARGENTINA TO
REINFORCE USG INTEREST IN CLOSE COOPERATION IN THE
HEMISPHERE ON COMBATTING TERRORISM. WILCOX SAID THAT
THE MOST SERIOUS THREAT COMES FROM HIZBALLAH.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON
CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 25X6
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 13 SEP 2024
DATE/CASE ID: 04 JAN 2010 200906077

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[REDACTED]

WILCOX SAID THE BEST APPROACH TOWARD IRAN IS A POLICY OF ISOLATION AND PRESSURE AND URGED THE GOA TO ADOPT A SIMILAR STANCE. PETRELLA ASSENTED AND NOTED GOA CONFLICTS WITH IRAN OVER A NUMBER OF ISSUES. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, MR. WILCOX ALSO BRIEFED PETRELLA ON U.S. POLICY TOWARD SYRIA. PETRELLA SAID THAT THERE WAS "TOTAL COINCIDENCE OF VIEWS" DURING SUMMIT CONSULTATIONS IN BUENOS AIRES IN AUGUST. HE SAID THAT THE RIO GROUP WAS DEBATING THE ISSUE OF INCLUDING TERRORISM ON THE AGENDA AND THAT ARGENTINA WOULD CONTINUE TO PUSH FOR INCLUSION.

END SUMMARY

3. ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR CHEEK, AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE WILCOX AND AN INTERAGENCY COUNTER-TERRORISM TEAM HELD A ROUND OF MEETINGS WITH ARGENTINE OFFICIALS ON SEPTEMBER 7. AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HE MET WITH VICE FOREIGN MINISTER PETRELLA. INTERIOR MINISTRY

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MEETINGS ARE REPORTED SEPTTEL.

4. MR. WILCOX TOLD PETRELLA THAT HE WAS IN ARGENTINA AT THE REQUEST OF SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER. HIS PURPOSE WAS TO REINFORCE USG INTEREST IN CLOSE COOPERATION IN THE HEMISPHERE ON COMBATTING TERRORISM. POINTING TO INCIDENTS SUCH AS THE AMIA BOMBING, WILCOX SAID THAT THE THREAT IN THE HEMISPHERE IS MORE SERIOUS THAN SUSPECTED TWO OR THREE YEARS AGO.

5. WILCOX SAID THAT THE MOST SERIOUS THREAT COMES FROM HIZBALLAH. THE GROUP, HE SAID, HAS CELLS IN THE U.S. AND IS NO DOUBT ORGANIZED IN ARGENTINA AS WELL. ALTHOUGH NOT INVOLVED IN THE WORLD TRADE CENTER BOMBING, THERE IS A LARGE BODY OF EVIDENCE THAT HIZBALLAH HAS BEEN BEHIND OTHER ATTACKS. WILCOX SAID THERE ARE STRONG REASONS TO BELIEVE THAT IT OPERATES UNDER DIRECTION OF IRANIAN PERSONNEL.

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HE NOTED THE VARYING APPROACHES BY WESTERN GOVERNMENTS TOWARD IRAN, SAYING THAT THE BRITISH STILL MAINTAIN RELATIONS AND THAT EVEN THE ISRAELIS HAVE SOME UNCERTAINTY ABOUT IRAN'S ACTIVITIES. THE ARGUMENT ABOUT IRAN IN ARGENTINA, HE

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SAID, HAS WAXED AND WANED BETWEEN THOSE WHO WANT TO
SEE STRONG ACTION AND THOSE WHO URGE RESTRAINT.

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8. PETRELLA RESPONDED THAT THE GOA AGREES WITH THE NEED TO ISOLATE THE IRANIAN REGIME. CONFLICTS WITH IRAN EXIST OVER A NUMBER OF ISSUES -- MIDDLE EAST PEACE, RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL, HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, AND GOA MEASURES TO STOP SHIPMENT OF SENSITIVE MATERIALS TWO YEARS AGO. AN IRANIAN BAN ON ARGENTINE

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CONSULTATIONS IN BUENOS AIRES -- FOREIGN MINISTRY

IMPORTS WILL COST ARGENTINA 100 MILLION DOLLARS IN
LOST EARNINGS. BUT, SAID PETRELLA, THE IRANIANS
APPEAR TO FEEL CORNERED. THEY HAVE MADE SOME
APPROACHES TO THE GOA, SUCH AS SEEKING A MEETING WITH
FONMIN DITELLA IN NEW YORK ON THE MARGINS OF THE

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UNGA. PETRELLA SAID THAT THE GOA REBUFFED THIS MOVE, TELLING THE IRANIANS THAT THERE IS NOTHING TO DISCUSS UNLESS THE GOI RELINQUISHES TERRORISM.

9. PETRELLA ASKED FOR USG VIEWS ON SYRIA'S ROLE IN TERRORISM. MR. WILCOX EXPLAINED THAT THE SYRIANS' HARBORING OF FOUR OR FIVE RADICAL GROUPS WAS THE RATIONALE FOR MAINTAINING DAMASCUS ON THE LIST OF STATE SPONSORS OF TERRORISM. HE SAID THAT THE GOS ITSELF HAS NOT SPONSORED ACTS OF TERRORISM SINCE THE 1980'S AND MADE REFERENCE TO THE CLOSE USG DIALOGUE WITH SYRIA ON THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS.

10. MR. WILCOX RAISED THE ISSUE OF INCLUDING COUNTER TERRORISM AS A TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION AT THE MIAMI SUMMIT. MR. MCLEAN MENTIONED INTERIOR MINISTER RUCKAUF'S IDEA OF MEETINGS ON COUNTER TERRORISM IN WASHINGTON BEFORE THE SUMMIT. PETRELLA SAID THAT THERE WAS "TOTAL COINCIDENCE OF VIEWS" WITH AMBASSADOR GILLESPIE DURING SUMMIT CONSULTATIONS IN BUENOS AIRES

IN AUGUST. HE SAID THAT THE RIO GROUP WAS DEBATING
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THE ISSUE OF INCLUDINGQND
THAT ARGENTINA WOULD CONTINUE TO PUSH FOR INCLUSION.
MORE BROADLY, PETRELLA SAID THAT SOME RIO GROUP
COUNTRIES DO NOT WANT TO ACCEPT A SUMMIT ORIENTED
TOWARD AN ACTION PROGRAM FOR GOVERNMENTS. ARGENTINA,
HE SAID, WOULD MAINTAIN ITS POSITIONS BEFORE THE RIO
GROUP.

11. PETRELLA SAID THAT THE QUICK ARRESTS AND CONVICTIONS IN THE WORLD TRADE CENTER BOMBING HAVE LED TO CRITICISM OF THE GOA INVESTIGATIONS OF THE AMIA AND ISRAELI EMBASSY BOMBINGS. AMBASSADOR PHIRTER, MFA UNDERSECRETARY FOR POLICY, INTERJECTED THAT MFA WOULD BENEFIT FROM LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S COORDINATING ROLE ON COUNTER-TERRORISM. MR. WILCOX SAID THAT THE USG HAS AN ACTIVE TRAINING PROGRAM WHICH COULD SERVE AS A POINT OF DEPARTURE FOR MORE IN-DEPTH EXCHANGES OF VIEWS BETWEEN USG AND GOA OFFICIALS. HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD PUBLICLY EXPRESS USG SUPPORT FOR GOA EFFORTS BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE, AND

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NOTE THAT SUCCESSFUL INVESTIGATIONS OF TERRORIST
INCIDENTS TAKE TIME AND REQUIRE DETAILED INVESTIGATIVE
WORK AND SUBSTANTIAL INVESTMENT OF RESOURCES.

12. AMBASSADOR-DESIGNATE WILCOX DID NOT CLEAR THIS
MESSAGE BEFORE DEPARTURE.

CHEEK

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